

Claire Clivaz and Jean Zumstein (eds.), with Jenny Read-Heimerdinger and Julie Paik, *Reading New Testament Papyri in Context—Lire les papyrus du Nouveau Testament dans leur contexte* (Leuven: Peeters, 2011) xiv + 440 pp. ISBN 978-90-429-2506-9 €80 (= BETL 242.)

The book presents the proceedings of a congress held at the University of Lausanne in October 2009. It contains 16 articles (two in German, five in French and the rest in English; two are written by the same author), distributed into four parts: 1) “Papyrology and the New Testament”, 2) “Egypt, Papyri and Christians”, 3) “Every Papyrus Tells a Story”, 4) “Some Further Considerations”. The authors, to mention only some, are noted because of their work in New Testament exegesis (J. Zumstein) or papyrology (P. Schubert); or for sharing an interest in manuscripts either in relation to New Testament textual criticism (J. K. Elliott, J. Read-Heimerdinger-J. Rius-Camps) or in connection with early Christian history (T. J. Kraus, K. Haines-Eitzen, A.-M. Luijendijk). Almost all of the contributors base their arguments on the analysis of specific texts transmitted in papyri. Some useful indexes close the book. Unfortunately, the pictures on pp. 124-125 are of poor quality. In cases like these in which the publisher cannot guarantee a good plate, it might be better just to refer to the web page containing the picture.

The notion that papyri are fundamental for our knowledge of the New Testament text is not new. What is more novel is the use has been made of them lately and the modes of interaction between papyrology and exegesis in recent years. T. J. Kraus presents a good picture of the situation. Concrete examples of the new approaches and possibilities appear throughout the volume, several of them bearing a direct relation to New Testament textual criticism.

One aspect which is discussed or alluded to in several articles is the recent shift in the understanding of the concept of “original text.” For example, for C. Clivaz, in the present digital culture, where the barriers between disciplines and classification of manuscripts are getting blurred, “the notion of ‘original text’ is moving from a linear origin-perception to an associative perception of texts, situated within a diversity of networks,” which calls for “an online critical edition of the Greek New Testament, with an apparatus open to the ‘wiki’ mode involving interaction between scholars” (p. 52). This new understanding also has some theological consequences, as Clivaz herself argues in relation to the status of the Scriptures and X. Gravend-Tirole discusses from the history of the formation of the canon and in relation to the hermeneutical principle of *sola Scriptura*.

The call to draw greater profit from the digital advances is also taken up by J. K. Elliott, who examines the editions of the New Testament papyri published since 1997 and underlines the importance of gaining quick access to manuscripts via the internet, so that critics may have a fuller *apparatus* at their disposal. The employment of new tools in New Testament textual criticism may be seen especially in two articles. In the first, D. Pastorelli calculates the distance between P⁴⁵ and the main Greek manuscripts of Mark 6 and 9 by means of what he calls a “clustering method” and the statistical processing software PHYLIP (Phylogeny Inference Package); in the second,

M. Theophilos advocates the use of multispectral imaging to recover faded, damaged, charred or oxidised readings of papyri. But the volume also contains more traditional types of analysis, as exemplified by J. Read-Heimerdinger—J. Rius-Camps's article, which seeks to trace the readings of Acts in Codex Bezae in the papyri witnesses of this book, as a starting point for the study of the development of the text of Acts in a wider context.

The other great area of interaction between papyrology and exegesis has to do with the history that lies behind each biblical papyrus. The volume tries to emphasize the importance of not limiting the analysis of a manuscript to the text that it transmits but of framing it in the world in which it was produced, read and used. And this should be done not only bearing in mind the bulk of the extant papyrological witnesses (P. Schubert), but also in comparison with literary and documentary texts, Christian and Jewish (R. Burnet, T. J. Kraus, S. Honigman, and D. Stoekl). The possibilities in this field are most varied, as the contributions reveal (C.-J. Gruber, K. Haines-Eitzen, J. Zumstein). A good example is the article, interesting both methodologically and conceptually, by A. Luijendijk, who analyses the three extant *Gospel of Thomas* papyri from the point of view of their format (book roll and codex) and in conjunction with other papyri and Christian literary writings, in order to determine to what degree *Gosp. Th.* might have had the status of Scripture in third century Oxyrhynchus.

In the present global world, where the barriers between different areas of knowledge are gradually falling, any effort to close the gap between biblical exegesis and papyrology is most welcome.

Juan Chapa